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file

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of Black Women Organized for Action
FROM: Aileen C. Hernandez
DATE: October 10, 1977
RE: BWOA Endorsements

Ordinarily I would not be writing a letter of this type simply because I could not be present at the BWOA meeting. I have been, and still am, a strong supporter of the concept of "trust" in the active members of BWOA--even when I have not agreed with a particular decision.

However, I am deeply concerned about recent events surrounding the Political Action Committee's review of candidates for the coming Supervisorial Election. I made my position clear at the meeting which assessed candidates for the Fourth and Seventh Districts. My position: "If there is a qualified Black woman in the race, I am for her". BWOA was formed to encourage the active participation of Black women in politics--and the ultimate expression of that participation would be a decision by a Black woman, to run for office. On those grounds, I am for Ella Hill Hutch in the Fourth District--and voted accordingly at the meeting on October 4th.

Had there been a clear expression of an opposite viewpoint, I would have understood that and lived with it.

What disturbs me is the "undercurrent" of hostility that has emerged. The PAC was split on the Fourth District endorsement. We permitted a "proxy" vote by a PAC member who left before the actual voting and that "dispensation" resulted in what all of us present thought was a tie vote. No one challenged this at the time--although everyone had the chance to do so. The PAC agreed, therefore, to submit both names to the membership for consideration--an appropriate decision, to my mind. The closeness of the vote warranted that decision.

Now, I am hearing rumblings that the tally was not honest--and I totally resent and reject that. I am appalled that anyone would suggest that one of our most dedicated and hard working members, Eleanor Spikes, would have knowingly mistallied the vote. Others also counted--including proponents of each of the top candidates--and no one disagreed with the tally.

October 10, 1977

I am also saddened by the fact that non-BWOA supporters of the candidates resorted to threats and intimidations in their drive to secure BWOA's endorsement. Perhaps we should be flattered by their assessment of the power of our approval, but I am not!

If I were at the meeting, I would urge your endorsement of Ella Hill Hutch. She is a proven vote-getter, with a track record for accountability, and I think she deserves BWOA's endorsement.

However, I am more concerned about BWOA's long-range survival than I am about this endorsement. The PAC left the meeting on October 4, in the sincere belief that there was divided support in the Fourth District. To overturn that concept, in "hindsight" would be disastrous. The membership should decide--after full discussion. And we should not permit anyone to attack the credibility and honesty of a BWOA member with the record of commitment of Eleanor Spikes.

You may be told that I am anti-male. I am not! I strongly support the endorsement of Bob Covington in the Ninth District. No one--absolutely--no one can lay claim to more, and more consistent commitment to District Elections than Bob Covington. He has my personal endorsement and I hope BWOA's organizational endorsement.

Voting and endorsement of candidates of one's choice are protected rights--won after many have died to protect that right. I hope that BWOA members will keep that firmly in mind as they decide on endorsements.

AILEEN C. HERNANDEZ